Shaban and Shabe-Barat amidst exaggeration and underestimation

By Mawlana Abdul Malek

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For a long time a class of people have been exaggerating Shabe Barat. They are engaging in unwanted deeds and practicing wrong customs at this occasion. The Ulamah (Islamic Scholars) have always been protesting these. Now there seems to be a newer class, who are completely abandoning and underestimating it. The later group's claim is:

'There is no basis of Shabe Barat in Islam. All the 'Rewayat' or descriptions about the matter is 'Mawzu' (obsolete) and 'Zayeef' (weak). Performing deeds according to these descriptions and relating Shabe-Barat a night of special benefit is not permitted by Shariah.'

This group publishes small books and leaflets and spread them out among general people in this regard.

In fact, just as the pervious exaggeration was incorrect, the present underestimation regarding Shabe- Barat is neither correct. Islam is the 'Deen' (complete roadmap of life) of balance, and all its lessons direct the straight way without any flaws.

The right and balanced position of Shabe Barat is: it has been proved by authentic Hadith. Without the appearance collective Ibadat, which has not been prescribed in Shariah and not inventing any new way in this occasion, individually performing a lot of Ibadat has also been proved by 'Rewayat' or descriptions. Assuming this night to be similar like others and supposing all the Hadith relating to it are 'Mawzu' and 'Zaeef' is wrong. Similarly, assuming this night to be sacred like Shabe-Qadr or more sacred than Shabe-Qadr both the creeds is baseless.

Here, we mention some authentic Hadith (appended with the reliable sources) on Shabe Barat – which depict its benefits and deeds to be performed.

First Hadith:

Mu-az Ibne Jabal (RA) quotes Rasulullah SallallahuAlaiyhiwaSallam: ***"Allah Ta'la looks on to His creation at the half of Shaban, and without 'mushrik' (who make partners with Allah Taala and jealous people – He forgives all." (Shahih Ibne Hibban)***

This Hadith proves that at this night the Rahmah (bounty) and forgiveness is broadly opened up by Allah Ta'la. But people absorbed in 'shirk' and jealousy are still deprived from this broad Rahmah (bounty) and forgiveness.

Whenever at a particular time there is an announcement of Rahmah (bounty) and forgiveness by Allah Ta'la – we need to be caring in performing good deeds. Because, through such deeds we become eligible for achieving the Rahmah (bounty) and forgiveness and we need to refrain from those sins, which deprive us from Allah Ta'la's Rahmah (bounty) and forgiveness.

As the aforementioned Hadith and other Hadith includes the announcement of widespread forgiveness, since long – the 15th Shaban's night has got popular by the name of *Night of Salvation*. Because at this night sins are pardoned) and we this is how we are set free from the unfortunate outcome of sins.

If there had been no second Hadith regarding the benefits of Shabe Barat, only this Hadith would have been sufficient to prove that this night is full of benefits, and it also sufficiently proves the importance of good deeds which make us entitled to be forgiven. Whereas, in the Books of Hadith, there are more AHadith relating to the subject with reliable sources.

Discussion on 'Sanad' (chain of description) of the Hadith

The aforementioned Hadith has been described in many authentic Hadith Books including its reliable Sanad (chain of description). Imam Muhammad Ibne Hibban, in his 'Kitabus Sahih' (which is also known as Sahih Hibban) had mentioned this Hadith (13/481A). This is Hadith No. 5665 of the mentioned Book. Apart from this, Imam Baiyhaqi R has described this Hadith in Shuabul Iman (3/382, Hadith 3833), 'Al Muj'jamul Kabeer' and 'Al Mujamul Aswat'. Many other Imams of Hadith have mentioned this Hadith in their Books.

The Sanad (chain of description) of this Hadith is authentic. For this, Imam Hibban has described it in 'Kitabus Sahih'. Some from the perspective of terminology has mentioned it 'Hasan'; Hasan is just a specific type of authentic Hadith.

Iman Muziri, Ibne Rajb, Nuruddin Haisami, Kastallani, Zurkani and other Hadith Specialists have stated this Hadith to be 'Worthy to be accomplished'. See, At-Targeeb Wattarheeb 2/118; 3/459; Latayeful Ma'arif 151; Majmauz Zawayed 8/65; Sharhul Mawahibil Laddunya 10/561

Shaikh Nasiruddin Albani – popular at present times, has mentioned eight other Hadith supporting this Hadith in his book Silsilatul Ahadisis Sahiha (3/135 – 139) and he concludes:

"Through these 'Rewayets' (descriptions) this Hadith proves to be authentic." Then Shaikh Albani (R) rejects those people's statement who – without any inquiry states that there is no Hadith in favor of Shabe Barat.

Nowadays some Salafi or *Gaiyre Muqallid* friends are seen to spread different types of leaflets. It's written there that, 'No benefits of Shabe Barat has been proved by

authentic Hadith.' Those friends can get lessons from the research of Shaikh Albani (R). Because it seems they are great fans of Shaikh Albani (R) and they seem to circulate his books. I courteously request those brothers, if you deny the benefits of this night by following Shaikh Ibne Baz or by your Tahkik (research), then those who believe in the benefits of this night according to the aforementioned Muhaddis and Fakihs on the basis of the Hadith, and make efforts to accomplish good deeds avoiding all bidats (innovations) and customs – what wrong have they done that you stand against them? And contrary to the documented decision of the present Ulama – you state another opinion, which is not 'above wrong' – and keep on circulating your opinion among general public and make the general people unconfident regarding the Ulamah-decision and in this way supporting the mission of the rejected (non-believers and misconception holders) ones – was it a bare necessity? There is no doubt that you think your opinion to be merely a possibility of 'Ijtehad' and certainly don't think it to be an opinion of 'Wahi' (divine revelation), and depend on it as completely flawless. Think sensibly, still is there any logical commentary on your stand?

My final request to you is, to know about the benefits and good deeds of this night, kindly read Shaikhul Islam Ibne Taiymiah (R)'s (Death 728 Hijri) Iktija-us Siratul Mustaqim /631-641 and Imam Zainuddin Ibne Rajb Rah's (Death 795 Hijri) Latayeful Ma'arif 151-157 and think, is their documented research worth of following or rather is it wise to accept the emotional opinion of Shaikh Ibne Baz? May be the later has mentioned such an opinion only to eradicate the exaggeration of ignorant people. But this is clear that the eradication of exaggeration is not by denying the truth, rather truth is revealed through its accurate presentation.

The deeds of this night

I have mentioned earlier the directions we deduce from the cited Hadith. Here is another Hadith:

From Hazrat Ala ibne Haris (R), Hazrat Ayesha Rad says, "Once Rasulullah SallallahuAlaiyhiwa Sallam stood for Salat at night and he stayed in Shezdah for such a long time that I thought he had passed away. I then woke up and shook his thumb. His thumb shook. He got up from Shezdah and completed his Salat and told me, O Ahyesha! or he said O Humaiyra! Did you think that the Rasul of Allah will seize your right? I answered, No O Rasulullah! By seeing your lengthy Shezdah I thought that you have passed away. Rasul asked, Do you know which night is this? I answered, Allah and his Rasul knows it best. Rasulullah SallallahuAlaihiwasallam said, "This is the night of half-Shaban (The Fifteenth of Shaban – the night of Fourteenth Shaban). Allah Ta'la pays attention towards His slaves at this night and forgives the

forgiveness seekers and helps the help seekers and leaves the jealous in their situation. Shuabul Iman, Baihaqi 3/382 – 368

From this Hadith it has been proved that, lengthy nafl prayers, in which the Shezdah is also lingered is expected. But it must be bore in mind, that the descriptions of different Salat with specific number of rakats and specific Suras to be recited in specific ways, which have been mentioned in many unreliable books are incorrect. Nothing such is mentioned in Hadith; these are people's mind derived conclusions. Correct way is: Say two rakats of nafl Salat as usual as many as possible and add any Sura possible. Recite the Holy Quran. Pronounce Darood Sharif. Perform Istegfar. Pray (make doa) and if necessary sleep for sometime. May such not happen that for saying prayers for the whole night you miss the Fajr Jamaat.

Fasting on the subsequent day

Hazrat Ali Ibne Abu Taleb Rad describes, Rasulullah SallalluAlaiyhiwaSallam said, "When the night of 15th Shaban comes – pass the it through Ibadat and fast the following day. Because, at this night after sunset Allah Ta'la descends to the lower skies and says, Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness? I will forgive him. Is there anyone who seeks rizk? I will provide him rizk. In this way till dawn Allah Ta'la calls upon (his slaves) by mentioning various necessities. Sunane Ibne Maza, Hadith 1384

The Sanad of this Hadith is Zayeef. But according all the Muhaddisins' are in the same opinion in case of benefits of 'Zayeef Hadith' that those are acceptable. Moreover, fasting in Shaban has been mentioned in authentic Hadith and Aiyamey Beej, i.e. the fasting of 13, 14, 15 at every lunar month – has also been proved by authentic Hadith.

Not to mention, 15th Shaban is a day of Shaban and it is included in Aiyamey Beej. For this, in several books of Fikah, fasting for one day has been mentioned. Again some have denied to mention that fasting for one day is mustahab or masnoon. Regarding this Hazrat Mawlana Muhammad Taqi Usmani Damat barakatuhum has mentioned in his Islahi Khutubat: "Another issue is fasting the following day of Shabe Barat, i.e. on the 15th Shaban. The subject needs to be deeply perceived. Among the vast Hadith collection only in one Hadith supports this. By the source of Sanad and Matan it is weak. So, according to many Ulamahs (by considering this Hadith) it is unwanted to say that fasting on this day is mustahab.

But yes, to fast in the whole month of Shaban has been mentioned in many Hadith. That is, fasting from 1st to 27th of Shaban is quite of benefit. But Rasulullah SallallahuAlaiyhiwaSallam has forbidden to fast on 28th and 29th of Shaban. He says, "Don't fast one/two days prior Ramadan." So that with full contentment and spontaneously preparation can be taken. But till 27th (Shaban) every day's fast is a matter of Barakah (blessing).

One noticeable fact is the 15th of Shaban is a day amongst Aiyame Beej. And our Prophet used to fast at Aiyame Beej every month. Therefore, if anyone fasts on this day keeping forth these two facts – Aiyame Beej and due to the significance of this day, then certainly Inshallah he will be rewarded. However, only emphasizing the fasting of 'the date 15th Shaban' is prohibited by many Ulamah. For this reason, most of the Fukahakeram have mentioned the fasting of 10th Muharram and 'Aiyame Arafah' in the list of Mustahab fastings, but the fasting of 15th Shaban has not been separately mentioned. Rather, they have stated fasting on any of the days of Shaban is worthy. Therefore, considering these points, if one fasts Inshallah he will get reward. But bear in mind, none of the days of this month has a special characteristic (regarding fasting).

The Nafl deeds of this night is not collective, rather individual

This must also be borne in mind that the Nafl deeds to be performed, should not to be accomplished collectively, according to authentic views it must be accomplished individually. Fard Salat is definitely to be said in the mosque. After whatever nafl is to be performed say those individually at home. Performing Salat in groups or collection in the mosques has no evidence according Hadith, neither was it practiced at the time of Sahaba (RA). – Iktizauz Siratal Mustaqim 2/631-641; Marakil Falah 219

However without any call or announcement if some people come to the mosque – they may concentrate in their Amal and not disturb each other.

At this night there are practices in some places of 'Waz' (lectures) after Magrib or Isha. Again in some places Milad is arranged after the program. In some places there is practice of 'Khatme Shabina' throughout the night. Moreover, all these are done in LoudSpeaker and the external speaker is also turned on. It is to be borne in mind, all these are wrong practices. The benefits and 'masayel' (lessons) of Shabe- Barat could be mentioned earlier. Delivering lectures by turning Loudspeaker on must not be the practice at this night (this is always offensive – unlimitedly using loudspeakers). By such practice, neither it is possible for devotees at home to accomplish deeds properly, nor is it possible for people in the mosque to perform Amal. The rest that ill people need is also hampered. May Allah Ta'la give us the ability to eradicate these wrong practices.

The objectionable deeds of this night

The tradition of cooking 'khichuri' or 'halua'; lightning mosques, houses, shops; cracking fire, or practicing fireworks, gathering in the grave yard; attending Mazar; women getting outside the house for shopping and attending Mazar etc all are

objectionable deeds of this night. Some of these deeds are forbidden at other times as well. And some, though those are permissible at other times (for eg. cooking khichuri and distributing it among the poor) – assuming these the activities of Shabe-Barat and getting engaged in these tasks being deprived of the main activities tawba, istegfar and nafl ibadah – can the former activities remain permissible? All these are the deceptions of satan. To refrain man from actual deeds satan engages him in these.

May Allah Ta'la keep us away from sins at the month of Shaban and accordingly let us embrace Ramadan. ***Ameen***

This article has been retrieved from the newly launched Internet edition of Al Kawsar (www.alkawsar.com). It is the magazine from Markaz ud Dawa Al Islami which is one of the toppest center for higher Islamic research. I have seen elders from Kakrail mosque taking masael from Markaz ud Dawa. Maulana Abdul Malek is the Head of Faculties and I consider him as the greatest Islamic scholar of Bangladesh (Many Alims as well). His elder brother Mufti Abul Hasan Abdullah is the Principal and said as the living encyclopedia of Islamic knowledge. Both of them are students of Mufti Taqi Usmani. May Allah give them long hayate taiyiba. Aameen.

Date: August 3, 2009. Sha'ban 12, 1430.